

HOUSE BILL NO. 2213

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the House Committee on Appropriations

on February 3, 2021)

(Patron Prior to Substitute--Delegate Guzman)

A BILL to require the establishment of a work group to study the mining and processing of gold in the Commonwealth, and to prohibit the issuance of certain mining permits; report.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. § 1. That the Secretary of Natural Resources, the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, and the Secretary of Commerce and Trade shall establish a work group to study the mining and processing of gold in the Commonwealth. Such work group shall include representation from the Virginia Council on Environmental Justice established pursuant to Article 36 (§ 2.2-2699.8 et seq.) of Chapter 26 of Title 2.2 of the Code of Virginia as well as the following stakeholder groups: experts in mining, hydrology, toxicology, geology, and public health; environmental organizations; representatives of potentially affected communities in localities with significant deposits of gold; and residents of Native American communities in such localities. The work group shall (i) evaluate the impacts of the mining and processing of gold on public health, safety, and welfare in the Commonwealth; (ii) evaluate whether existing air and water quality regulations are sufficient to protect air and water quality in the Commonwealth from the mining and processing of gold, including evaluation of the impacts of different leaching and tailings management techniques on downstream communities; (iii) evaluate whether existing bonding, reclamation, closure, and long-term monitoring of sites for such mining or processing are sufficient; and (iv) report its findings to the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy no later than December 1, 2022.

§ 2. Until July 1, 2023, the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy shall not issue any new permit to operate a gold mine of an area larger than 10 acres in the Commonwealth. Such prohibition shall not apply to any restricted permit issued pursuant to § 45.1-180.4 of the Code of Virginia.